

Spring Gardening Calendar

Conditions during each spring in your location will determine the actual timing of your garden work. The last frost date will vary from year to year, and moisture and warm weather are unpredictable. The following recommendations are based on historical data for the Helena area and the experience of gardeners in the region. You will need to adjust the recommendations based on the season and your knowledge of your particular area. A Montana climate summary is available from the MSU Extension service at <http://gardenguide.montana.edu/mtclimate.asp>. If you have questions regarding the timing of garden activities in your area, please feel free to ask a Master Gardener at HelenaMasterGardeners@hotmail.com.

March

- ♣ Prepare garden beds: weed, remove old growth
- ♣ Test garden soil for nutrient content (if the soil is dry)
- ♣ Prune apple and other fruit trees before sap starts flowing and before first buds become established
- ♣ Prune out suckers on lilacs, chokecherry and other suckering shrubs and trees
- ♣ Clean up overwintering plants such as geraniums, begonias, coleus etc...cut off all leggy growth
- ♣ Late month - consider sowing sweet peas, snapdragons, pansies and violas, depending on your location



April

Early April

- ♣ Start tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, eggplant and broccoli indoors for transplant
- ♣ Add compost, organic matter or fertilizers (based on soil test) to garden soil
- ♣ Clean up old debris from garden beds and weed
- ♣ Sow indoors warm season annual flowers
- ♣ Start plans for garden planting
- ♣ Direct seed cool weather seeds: sweet peas, snap peas, pansies, violas, spinach, arugula, lettuce, chard, radishes, kale

Mid April

- ♣ Direct seed carrots, beets, parsnips, kohlrabi, onion sets and seeds
- ♣ Start cauliflower seeds indoors
- ♣ Plant pansy and viola starts among waning spring flowering bulbs
- ♣ Start cucumbers, squash, pumpkins indoors for transplant



May

Early May

- ♣ Start hardening off cold frame transplants – exposing them to outside temperatures during the day
- ♣ Direct seed beans, seed potatoes
- ♣ Direct seed annual flowers
- ♣ Set out transplants of cabbage and broccoli

“Average” Last Frost: May 18th

Mid to Late May

- ♣ Plant corn, transplants of tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, squash, cucumbers
- ♣ Transplant warm season annuals
- ♣ Start checking for insects such as aphids, slugs, flea beetles, and cutworms

